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ABSTRACT

Videos, guest speakers, and case studies are all excellent ways to familiarize students with how advertising is managed in other cultures, but they are no substitute for experiencing international advertising firsthand. To plan for a trip abroad with students (and 12 is the optimal number): (1) identify learning outcomes for an international advertising seminar; (2) generate a rough overview of the trip, including dates, cities and companies to visit; (3) enlist the support of the college administration; (4) determine whether there is enough student interest; (5) contact alumni relations to learn of graduates who may be working at international firms; and (6) assign students agencies and accounts to research. In one international advertising seminar, students, on day 1 (in New York), heard from International Advertising Age magazine and from a representative of the International Advertising Association. On day 2 (still in New York), students discussed the role and direct impact of direct marketing in integrated marketing communications. Also on day 2, students heard a presentation from Young and Rubicam on the "Zero Cavities" campaign for three different markets--Latin America, India, and Europe, and a presentation from BBDO on how PepsiCo products are advertised domestically. On day 3 (in Amsterdam) students discussed the importance of brands and branding and the development of a consistent corporate identity for KLM Airlines. On days 4 and 5 (in London), students heard from major firms, about their marketing strategies. Back in the United States, an international advertising seminar will provide the accompanying faculty member with many materials to use in the classroom. (TB)

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Don't Settle for the Next Best Thing to Being There: Globalize Your Advertising Curriculum with an International Trip

A Paper for the Teaching Standards Competition Research in Brief

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Abstract

Videos, guest speakers and case studies are all excellent ways to familiarize your students with how advertising is managed in other cultures, but they are no substitute for experiencing international advertising firsthand. This paper discusses an international advertising seminar offered by a large Midwestern university. Agencies and clients in three cities, New York, Amsterdam and London, were visited during the break between the fall and spring semesters.

Don't Settle for the Next Best Thing to Being There: Globalize Your Advertising Curriculum with an International Trip

Videos, guest speakers and case studies are all excellent ways to familiarize your students with how advertising is managed in other cultures, but they are no substitute for experiencing international advertising firsthand. Sponsoring an international advertising seminar can help your students not only identify the similarities and the differences of various campaigns and discuss their rationale with those who created them, but also help agencies become familiar with your program and the quality of your students. An added benefit is the opportunity to strengthen ties with alumni.

International advertising is growing in importance. An article in the March 20, 1995 issue of Advertising Age International reports that worldwide advertising spending was up in 1994 and is expected to rise this year. The explosive growth of new free market economies in Eastern Europe, South Africa and Russia is fueling advertising growth in these areas, among others. Editorial content of this publication consistently discusses the problems and opportunities when United States brands are expanded into established and emerging international markets.

The Journal of Advertising devoted the entire March 1994 issue to the subject of international advertising. The effects of the country's culture, language, laws and market conditions on advertising were among the issues studied by researchers. The general consensus was that global markets are not homogeneous and that advertising must be tailored to its intended audience. This breakdown can not only occur on a country-by-country basis, but also within different areas of the same country.

Thus, it is of critical importance that today's advertising students understand issues related to international advertising. The likelihood of them working in an advertising agency or with a client seeking to build or to increase a global presence is high and a challenge they must be prepared to meet.

This paper discusses an international advertising seminar offered by a large Midwestern university. Agencies and clients in three cities, New York, Amsterdam and London, were visited during the break between the fall and spring semesters.

Planning

The idea for the international advertising seminar originated with two alumni who were lunching in New York. They shared with each other how much they would like to help the students at their alma mater learn more about the advertising business, but how distance made it difficult to do this. One thought led to another and soon they found themselves outlining a trip. The overall goal would be to select multinational accounts and visit their advertising agencies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Regardless of how the idea for an international seminar originates, the following steps provide an outline for planning an activity of this nature.

Step One: Identify learning outcomes for an international advertising seminar. Knowing what you want to accomplish will help you evaluate the value of the many options you will have during your planning. Our learning outcomes were three-fold:

- To gain a clearer understanding on the branding of products on a domestic and an international level by visiting advertising agencies, attending presentations and participating in seminars on the various brands that those agencies represented;

- To identify strategic and tactical differences between advertising developed in New York and advertising developed in Amsterdam and London; and,

- To highlight research opportunities for students interested in multinational advertising.

Step Two: Generate a rough overview of the trip: dates, cities to visit, cost, accounts to review. Leave room for flexibility to allow yourself to take advantage of opportunities that will arise as you continue planning.

Step Three: Enlist the support of your school's administration. Identify how this trip will help your department, school and university achieve its goals.

Step Four: Determine the interest of students. You could use existing organizations such as the Ad Club to conduct a survey, or you could organize a meeting to poll them. While interest may be high, not all students will be able to afford the trip. But, don't underestimate the power of students to find money for something they would really like to do.

Step Five: Contact your alumni relations staff to learn of any graduates who might be working in international advertising. Select several names and telephone them to assess their interest in coordinating your visits for that city. Ask for their suggestions regarding alumni to contact in other cities or interesting international advertising campaigns to study.

Step Six: Work with alumni and others to contact potential agencies and determine your itinerary.

Step Seven: Assign to the students agencies and accounts to research. Share findings with other seminar participants.

The International Advertising Seminar

Day One: ***Opening Luncheon - New York***

Overview: An editor from International Advertising Age and a representative from the International Advertising Association provided an overview of what they felt students would experience during the seminar.

Key points included: (1) Obvious and subtle cultural differences exist between the United States and other countries. Advertising must reflect the culture of the targeted country. (2) Growth is occurring in various geographic areas. Advertising must coincide with this trend. (3) Research plays a major role in determining how multinational brands need to be introduced and promoted to an individual country.

Students were advised to accept the practices, attitudes and other aspects of another country, recognizing their importance in what makes that country's culture unique and special.

Day Two: *Wunderman Cato Johnson - New York*

Overview: The role and impact of direct marketing in an integrated marketing communications was discussed, using AT&T World Plus program as an example.

Key points included: (1) Direct response is any communication with a call to action. (2) The line between what is considered traditional advertising and direct response has been blurred. (3) Without strong branding through advertising, direct response cannot be successful. (4) Direct response has the ability to eliminate waste circulation in mass media and to truly concentrate a campaign's resources on the best prospects.

Students were advised to think beyond traditional advertising in campaign development and to include direct response.

Day Two: *Young & Rubicam - New York*

Overview: Agency officials presented the "Zero Cavities" campaign for three different markets: Latin America, India and Europe.

Key points included: (1) While the same positioning strategy may be used to reach consumer segments with similar attitudes and values in different areas of the world, the creative execution of that strategy needs to be tailored to each market. (2) Research is essential to determined a market's perception of a brand and its competition.

Students were advised to learn more about efficient brand marketing across the globe and to integrate more research into a campaign's strategic direction and creative execution.

Day Two: *BBDO - New York*

Overview: Agency officials discussed how PepsiCo products are advertised on a domestic level.

Key points included: (1) Stick with advertising that has worked for you. Pepsi alienated their younger audience with ads that resembled Coke's feel-good commercials. They later returned to their successful niche of the "young have fun" theme. (2) Product endorsement by celebrities can be a very successful advertising tool and is one PepsiCo has used for more than 30 years. Two celebrities PepsiCo has used, Michael Jackson and Madonna, have global appeal.

Students were advised to thoroughly analyze research and other critical information before changing a campaign's strategy.

Day Three: *KLM Airlines, PMSvW/Y&R - Amsterdam*

Overview: The importance of brands and branding and the development of a consistent corporate identity for KLM Airlines was discussed.

Key points included: (1) A company's most important function is to serve its customers. One way to communicate this goal is through the development of a service-oriented corporate identity. (2) Corporate identity must be visible, coherent, consistent, recognizable and memorable. (3) Consistent house style design is one of the critical tools in the development of a corporate identity. This style must be flexible enough to withstand a multitude of applications over a long period of time and changing market conditions. (4) The perception a customer has of your company is the only element that matters.

Students were advised to truly understand the value of the brand, recognizing that a brand name is a direct reflection of a company's reputation and that it influences it long- and short-term ability to compete in the marketplace.

Day Four: *BBDO/Abbot Mead Vickers - London*

Overview: The advertising strategies and tactics of PepsiMax (a mid-calorie cola targeted at males in Canada and Europe and now being tested in the United States as Pepsi XL) in the United Kingdom and Europe were discussed.

Key points included: (1) Companies often cannibalize their own lines in order not to lose market share to a competitor. (2) The creative concept of a campaign used in one country can be adapted for use in another. PepsiMax Europe utilized the concept in the diet Mountain Dew commercials shown in the United States. (3) Not all new products are introduced in the United States before expanding to other countries.

Students were advised to understand the particular niche a new product is expected to fill in a product line and a product category.

Day Four: *Howell, Henry, Chaldecott, Lury & Partners - London*

Overview: Today's marketplace is characterized by over-communication, market saturation and hyper-competition. For an advertiser to be successful, a holistic, multidimensional approach must be utilized.

Key points included: (1) Today's advertising climate makes for strange bedfellows. Witness Mercedes and Swatch, IBM and Apple, among others. (2) Research is key, and should be used for illumination as well as for support. (3) For an advertiser to successfully target its customers, database marketing must be utilized. Sweepstakes are good list-builders.

Students were advised to make advertising one part of their lives rather than their life. They should spend time with their families, travel, read and do other activities they enjoy. This agency's employees regularly go home without work between 5-6 p.m. and rarely pull all-nighters. Howell, Henry, Chaldecott, Lury & Partners was voted Agency of the Year in the United Kingdom for 1994 and was named London's best place to work in 1993.

Day Five: *The Daily Telegraph and West Ferry Printers*

Overview: This session compared and contrasted newspapers in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Key points included: (1) The United Kingdom media is based on newspapers, reaching 75 percent of the population, while the United States is more dependent on electronic media and direct response. (2) Deadlines are extremely important. A delay of an hour during a pre-production step multiplies itself during the production schedule. This has the potential to impact circulation guarantees and distribution. (3) Automation in the printing press has reduced the number of people required to produce the final newspaper product.

Students were advised to understand the role of various media in individual countries and to use this knowledge in selecting appropriate communications vehicles for news and advertising.

Day Five: *Young and Rubicam - London*

Overview: This presentation explained how Colgate brands itself domestically through advertising campaigns, strategy and media, and how this differs from the worldwide approach.

Key points included: (1) In managing a brand, the company and advertising agency must have a sense of the four primary pillars of brand growth: familiarity, esteem, relevance and differentiation. (2) Brand decline is not inevitable. A product can rejuvenate itself and revert the declining life cycle.

Students were advised to study the position of the brand and to use this as a framework for understanding where the brand stands in the eyes of the consumer.

Major Themes Stressed by the Agencies

Certain themes were stressed throughout the week by all agencies and clients.

The Value of the Brand Is Paramount

Winning strategies protect the brand. A brand is not a one-time purchase, but rather a history of experiences. Brands offer opportunities for relationships that go well beyond the actual product or service, with Disneyworld, My First Sony and Chicago's Niketown being examples.

Research Is Essential

Research is critical at all stages of campaign development. While it can guide and justify certain decisions, perhaps research's greatest asset is in identifying challenges and opportunities before they emerge. Agencies that can deliver and interpret this kind of information will always find their services in demand.

Global Advertising Is a Myth

While a brand may be advertised in many different parts of the world, the strategy, execution and audience will probably be different for every country and sometimes areas of those countries. The key is to understand the customers' needs for interaction and involvement and to develop strategies to maximize this.

Advertising Must Be Open to a Holistic Approach

The old way of doing advertising won't work in today's market: It's one-way communication, too impersonal and has limited responsiveness. Advertising agencies that survive will espouse integrated thinking, allowing them to be competitive, innovative, anticipatory, collaborative and accountable. Reimbursement systems may have to be adapted to accommodate the use of numerous communication tools.

Evaluation

All goals were met. Agencies and clients generously gave of their time and expertise. Multinational accounts were studied, case studies were presented, agencies' and clients' offices were visited.

Students were taught by the masters of advertising: presidents and heads of top agencies, worldwide creative directors, international media planners and senior vice presidents.

The hospitality was warm and sincere. Refreshments were served and the students received several gifts.

Students spent approximately $1,100 for the international advertising seminar. Approximately half of this cost was for airfare.

Promotion of the international advertising seminar is underway in the university's and school's alumni publications.

Using the International Seminar in the Classroom

An international advertising seminar will provide the accompanying faculty member with many materials to use in the classroom. These materials have multiplied the number of students who have benefited from the lessons learned on the trip.

Agencies and clients generously shared their presentation materials. Audiovisual aides used in the presentations and case studies such as overhead transparencies, tapes of advertising examples, planning documents and research were given to the faculty member. These have numerous classroom applications from the formal presentation of international case studies to anecdotal examples of various points.

The faculty member also had the opportunity to personally meet and visit with agency executives and clients. These contacts have proven valuable in securing additional advertising tapes for classroom use and in providing information about current campaigns.

Some Other Lessons Learned

• Keep your group size to about 12 people. You will fit into most meeting rooms, be able to stay together when walking and can economically share a few taxis.

• Offer only one option for travel and other arrangements. It's amazing how many special requests you may receive from asking to stay at friends' apartments to save lodging costs to wanting to take an afternoon off to see long lost relatives. Denying such requests keeps you from being a travel agent, maintains your sanity and helps you stay focused on the original goals.

• Review tipping practices with the students. Most haven't much experience in this area.

• Build in some free time. Our schedule did not allow for sightseeing and other tourist activities, and, in retrospect, it should have. The hesitancy was three-fold: our desire to maximize the student's exposure to international advertising; each day's meals and lodging cost about $100; and the spring semester started two days after we returned home.

• Take some university gifts such as mugs and sweatshirts with you to give to the presenters.

• If your trip will take place in early January, remember that most advertising agencies close between Christmas and New Year's Day. This could cause problems if you are trying to make final arrangements or to confirm your meetings.

Future Trips

Once the trip has been evaluated, the faculty should make a decision about future international trips. Some issues to be explored include new locations, accounts to be studied, frequency, alumni to be involved and timeframe.

This seminar also helped identify other ways students could be exposed to international advertising. Obviously a trip overseas has a built-in excitement factor not matched by these other methods. But, if the goal is to increase your students' familiarization with multinational accounts, consider these less expensive alternatives.

Guest speakers from advertising agencies or clients with an international scope could visit your classes and present case studies. An evening or weekend seminar would provide additional time for in-depth discussion.

A day trip to an advertising agency within driving distance or a 2-3 day trip to a regional site would allow students to personally visit the agencies' and clients' offices, meet those who have worked on the campaigns and attend presentations for a variety of multinational accounts.

Students could do case studies of international campaigns. A key component of such an assignment would be research on the country's people, laws, language(s) and customs. This would complement the actual presentation and discussion of the advertising campaign.